

# News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## China Camp Campground Reopens Ahead of Schedule

SAN RAFAEL – A popular campground in Marin County reopened today after being closed for two weeks because of the accelerated effects of Sudden Oak Death disease. About 80 trees were cut down to make the Backranch campground safe, allowing for the reopening two weeks ahead of schedule.

Wood from the felled trees is now stacked in the campground and when it is dried, will be burned in place, allowing the nutrients to return to the soil. Campers are prohibited from removing the wood from the piles, including for use in campfires, because of fear of spreading the disease outside the area.

About 70 other trees will be removed from along trails in the park, which could lead to intermittent closures of areas, state parks officials said. Under an arrangement with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, the work is being performed by prison inmate crews. Trail users should be alert for closures, avoid fallen trees or limbs and immediately report any problems to a State Park Ranger.

The Backranch campground was closed in the third week of October when State Parks officials determined that the disease had weakened native oak trees in the park and created a dangerous situation for campers. Large limbs and entire trees had fallen without notice due to infection by the plant pathogen.

Trail users should be alert for closures, avoid fallen trees or limbs and immediately report any problems to a State Park Ranger.

Sudden Oak Death syndrome was first identified in Marin County in 1995. It received its name because it kills seemingly healthy trees quickly. Scientists say, however, that the trees are often inflicted with Sudden Oak Death for years before showing any symptoms.

Eight counties in California, including Marin County, have been identified as within a zone of infestation by Sudden Oak Death syndrome. In those counties, specific regulations govern the transportation and disposal of wood products.

China Camp State Park has 1,640 acres of natural watershed along the shores of San Francisco Bay. Features include extensive intertidal salt marsh, meadow and oak habitats that are home to a variety of wildlife, including deer, squirrels and numerous birds.